The Seed Sower.

A Magazine for the Church, the School, and the Home.

FEBRUARY, 1897.

Be mindful of the Children.

Be mindful of the children in your speech,
  And keep discreet control upon your tongue,
  Lest their quick ears grow cognizant of wrong,
And so deprave their spirits,—I impeach
That man as villainous whose habits teach,
  Or words convey corruption to the young:
Be mindful of the children in your speech.

Do not their curiosity betray,
  Their innocence and guileless trust pervert,
  Impressionable, sensitive to hurt
Through harsh or heedless answers, when ye may—
Instead of leading their frank faith astray—
  Enlarge the knowledge of a mind alert;
Be mindful of the children in your speech.

Like some clear stream, illumined by heaven's bright smile,
  From its soul-source a child's thought speeds to greet
  The stranger world, of all that it doth meet,
Reflecting the fair features, till the guile
Of foul infection dim it and defile.
  Oh! woe to him who makes the fount less sweet,
Or taints the stream, once pure as heaven's bright smile.

The Way of Salvation.

If a man himself would save,
  Then he will be lost, we say:
Nay, he is already lost,
  Selfishness is doomed to-day.

But if he his life would lose
  For another's sake, we say:
Then, though dying, he shall live,
  Such a soul is saved to-day.

H. T. GRISWOLD.

A Happy New Year.

A SERMON FOR EVERY DAY, PREACHED IN MANCHESTER COLLEGE CHAPEL, JANUARY 3RD, 1897,

BY THE REV. J. E. CARPENTER, M.A.

PHILIPPIANS iv. 4.—"Rejoice in the Lord alway; again I will say, rejoice."

PHILIPPIANS iv. 11.—"I have learned in whatsoever state I am, therein to be content."

PHILIPPIANS iii. 13-14.—"Brethren, I count not myself yet to have apprehended, but one thing I do, forgetting the things which are behind, and stretching forward to the things which are before, I press on toward the goal unto the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

We have wished each other "A Happy New Year." The words have fallen lightly from our lips; they have been showered upon us through the post. Do they simply embody a cheap conventionality? Are they only a bit of easy good nature or of social imitation? Or are they really founded upon a serious thought of life; have they a root and ground in that unseen out of which we have come unknowingly, in which we continually live, to which we commit ourselves now and for evermore?

Even a custom of mere good fellowship is not without its deeper side. It stands for that strange sum of human relations by which the welfare of each is bound up with that of all. It means that no one can live wholly to himself. It does not reach very far—the circle of our acquaintance is narrow—but within its range it recognises the significance of the ties that knit us each to each, and it declares that the good wish, the kindly disposition, the attitude of right

feeling towards the men and women who fill the scene of our daily doings, and people the chambers of our imagination—these are the elementary conditions of social health, the soil out of which may spring flowers of beauty and fruits of worth.

May I without undue strain draw out of it a higher note? Then I would say that these familiar words are a witness to something more penetrating and more enduring still. They imply the moral strength of joy, its significance as a guide and support of noble conduct, its power to harmonise the energies of our nature, to subdue their conflicts, and to give them high direction towards great ends. They suggest that sunshine has as much to do with the freshness, the force, and the fineness of character, as the cloud of sorrow or the night of pain. They testify that however much we may need difficult discipline of sacrifice and renunciation, yet even these are not incompatible with happiness—happiness, indeed, not of the narrow and self-centred kind—happiness that rests upon large thoughts and wide embracing trusts, and is not marred by unnexpected curtailments of comfort, but depends on communion with a "central peace subsisting at the heart of endless agitation."

Year after year we have uttered this wish with a persistence which vicissitudes of personal experience have in no way impaired. What do the years bring with them to justify it? Is it only a vain hope, or a stable product of assured achievement? Do we realise from day to day, not at exceptional seasons, but as part of the continuous moral atmosphere (so to speak) of life, that we are for ever converting the impressions of the hour into a tissue, strangely woven of memory and forgetfulness, which enfolds all the events that overtake us, and shelters them with a warm radiance of trust, or leaves them open to chill frosts of indifference, or cutting blasts of despair? We cannot, indeed, live always with equal intensity at lofty altitudes of great emotion. It may be, for the elder among us, that no single year like that which has now closed, has brought us a joy so new, so fresh, so exquisite, as that which remembrance holds for us from some earlier time. But these moments of rapture are only possible because of the common gladness of our days. The blessings we most cherish—our appreciation of natural beauty, for example, with all its seasonal variety, —our power to enter into the poet's vision, or hear the music which the great artist fetches for us out of the silence and the ambient air—our reliance on the support or sympathy of friends in plans of common work or crises of personal difficulty—our sense of the graciousness of a beautiful home where mutual endeavours blend in one accord of purpose and of love . . . these have in truth their moments of vivid realisation, which suffuse the level stretches of duller perception with their remembered light, yet they would be impossible but for the continuous if lesser satisfactions above which they rise like beacons on the way. And so we are for ever rearing through common events the temple of our joy; and day after day comes upon us out of the unknown with new possibilities which we confidently await, and are sure that we cannot exhaust, no, not even though disaster should dash the cup of gladness on a sudden from our lips, or death snatch from our side the companion and interpreter of our soul. But this is possible only on one condition. We cannot win happiness if we do not give it. We cannot expect to possess that which we do nothing to promote, nor may we glibly say to others "be of good cheer," while we stand aloof and minister nothing to their needs. The New Year's wish, then, involves the wisher in an implicit pledge. No more of the querulous temper, no more vague dissatisfaction, no more self-indulgence in aimless, indefinite longing! No more proposals to take all we can get without responsibility of return! We have to make our contribution to the social store, and the treasury of the world's joy must be the richer for our mites. Some elect souls there are, indeed, on whom in the mystery of things is laid especially the burden of the world's cares and griefs. The shadow at least of that burden falls upon us all at times, but I do not speak of that to-day. Rather would I try for a moment to lift off the veil that is apt to disguise so much of our common experience, and interpret it as a continuous source, an everflowing spring, of joy. I touch, indeed, only upon two aspects of it; on the one hand, its root in spiritual content, on the other, its transcendence above our inevitable moral discontent.

"I have learned," said the Apostle Paul, "in

whatsoever state I am, to be content." There are many struggles of heart hidden behind that "I have learned." The lesson was assuredly not easy. A passionate impetuous nature does not readily yield itself without protest or resistance to the shocks of circumstance, to baffled plans and thwarted expectations. We are all of us acquainted in some form or other with the same conflict. If we do not take the large and general view that the times are out of joint, we are at least occasionally conscious that we are so in particular. There is always some special difficulty that stands in the way of harmony between ourselves and our situation. It may be the small interruptions to our peace caused by some recurring infirmity of health, the physical and mental depression that follows indigestion or over-wrought nerves, the irritation that is born of pain, the dim anxiety that hovers over possibilities of disease. It may be the friction that rises in our daily work. We think that we have a right to demand that it shall be interesting, and we find it dismally dull, if not positively distasteful. It does not give scope for the gifts which we believe ourselves to possess; it is unillumined by any lights of intellectual enterprise; it involves us in daily companionship with natures uncongenial to our own, whose habits and methods we cannot assimilate, whose conceptions of business integrity we do not approve, whose standard of achievement seems pitched upon another plane. Or, possibly, the sense of over-strain besets us. We are uncomfortably conscious that we have undertaken what is beyond our powers of mind, outside the range of our moral insight, too exacting for our energy of will. The sense of our incompetence to grapple with high issues stings us to futile effort. We are burdened with a responsibility to which we are not adequate, and we suffer from a corrosion of energy which eats out the strength of our best endeavours. We have not the secret of spiritual content. We have not found the larger self. We have not linked ourselves to something wider, deeper, vaster than our personal circumstance. We have not realised that the universe does not revolve round you and me, but includes us in an ampler purpose, and calls on us to serve it with untiring toil.

For there is a larger self, and we enter into it by many ways of more or less nobility and worth. It is the limitations of our small individuality that render us uneasy. Break down these, pass out of them by almost any avenues of thought or feeling, and you may enter a world of ideal intents and glorious achievement, in which you obscurely feel you have your share, and out of which you draw unexpected strength. Even the schoolboy soon learns to live in the glory of his house or school; the soldier is ennobled by allegiance to his regiment, and in its doughty deeds himself wins might; the successor of apostles is uplifted by their strength, and what seems the arrogance of the priest is often no personal claim, it is the ill-regulated inflation of the larger self. When that strange dramatic incident turned the eyes of Europe last summer from the Bosphorus to the Northern seas, as the heroes of the Fram, emerging from the silence of the arctic night, followed in a fortnight the splendid leader of their great adventure, who did not sympathise with the joy of Norway? Who did not realise that in Nansen, and all that he stood for of ideal devotion, of courage, and of sacrifice, every Norwegian found his larger self, so that the peasant on his stony farm, the fisher folk upon their rock-bound isles, could rise above their poverty and longing, and knew themselves knit in one being with the bold discoverer who had set his dauntless steps where foot of man before had never trod. That is the meaning in its nobler form of that imperial sense of England's destiny which sways so many hearts in our own land. I know how much of evil greed, of vulgar self-assertion, of base design, may take refuge beneath it. I use it now only as a symbol for the sense of larger life which grows beneath unity of law, beneath equal justice, beneath government, not by irresponsible tyranny, but by established order; beneath the obedience which brings men of divers races, languages, religions, under one sovereignty; beneath the reverence for each other which knits them as brothers in the bond of peace. This is what gives to the student in his science, to the scholar in his endeavour to interpret the past, to the teacher who strives to serve the living present, to the artist in his vision of beauty, to the preacher in his church, to the statesman who is not simply opportunist and partizan, the passion for the ideal, which lifts him above the contradictions of his time and place, and inly harmonises his aims with his power and circumstance. He does

what he can, and he commits the rest to his cause and its supporters, to the angels of truth and loveliness, of charity and right, that are for ever working out the will of God.

Now the first Christians beheld these ideal elements of life presented to them in Christ. There was the wisdom, there was the power of God, displayed before them in the actual history of a person. Those large, and perhaps somewhat vague, imaginative forms, in which some of us catch hold of the same conceptions, the order of nature, the progress of the race, the incarnation of God in humanity, the relation of man to the infinite, were summed up for them in a single concrete individuality through which they, too, entered into life. That high energy of soul, which they derived from him, made them sharers in a spiritual inheritance beyond the vicissitudes of change. They felt themselves brought through Christ into contact with an eternal purpose, in which each one of them, however insignificant, might have a part. The advancing revelation of truth, the destinies of nations, all that constitutes the mighty sum of history, and the boundless hopes that rest upon it, these were inwrought into the great providence of God, and in this great complex, however bewildering it might seem, no soul of trust could ever lose its way, for all things worked together to it for good. The powers of height and depth would beset it in vain. Time could not weary it, death could not crush it. For ever did it repose in safety on the central purpose that informed the whole, the love of God made manifest in Christ. There was the solace for its pains, there was the rescue from its peril. There was the assurance of its destiny, there was the key to its present lowliness and its future glory. God needed it, just there where it was; needed it in the organic order to bear what he allotted, to enjoy what he bestowed, and to praise him always; needed it, also, just there in the spiritual order, to do the work he assigned to it with the gifts and powers which he provided, for all were ideally one in Christ, the symbol, and so the actual instrument, of eternal good. In such a world, full of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God, what mattered if the flesh suffered, the soul was always free. Well might an apostle who rose to the height of his great argument, declare that he had learned in whatsoever state he was, to be content. "Rejoice in the Lord always, and again I say unto you, Rejoice."

And yet on one side of our nature, and Paul knew it, content is disastrous, if not fatal. The easy acquiescence which lightly affirms "Whatever is, is right," is as culpable and as futile as the spirit of rebellion, which is, on principle, against the government of the universe as of the state, and is never weary of asserting that "whatever is, is wrong." The worship of what the poet of these latter days calls "the God of things as they are," may very quickly degenerate into a base connivance with the powers of hell. I do not speak now of the significance of social unrest, of the healthy symptoms of discontent, deep-seated and far-reaching, which are a necessary condition of advance towards fairer institutions and more equal opportunities. I speak rather of the danger of personal lethargy which overcomes us when we are lulled into an undiscerning ease by ignobly surrendering the continuous conflict of the moral life into what we are pleased to consider the conditions imposed upon us by the divine will. It is true in one sense that we have not made ourselves. We enter this world with an inheritance that we did not choose. We are endowed with tempers and impulses, with aptitudes and propensities, which link us to the generations of our race, and stand in our own persons for the equipment with which God has decreed that we shall start upon our way. But it is no less true in another sense that we are for ever making ourselves. Our being is a continual creation, in which God summons us to work with him, and hour by hour, day by day, realise his purpose for us. If this is a solemn trust which is full of responsibility, it is full also of a strenuous joy, the joy of shaping thought, feeling, will, to glorious ends. To stand still in this process is a sort of moral death. It is to lose touch with the power of God, to step outside his wisdom, to gainsay his love, for it is to fail in the intention he has for us. Yet, on the other hand, progress is always more or less laborious, difficult, exacting. In each failure lies either the positive pain of conscious unworthiness, or the more deadly and numbing anodyne of unconscious unworthiness, and the clear eye and the unspoiled heart will never doubt wherein lies the truest healing and the richest mercy of heaven.

The law of our life, then, seems to involve on one side a perpetual discontent, a weariness of ourselves, a never-ceasing endeavour to escape from our own limitations, which may well make us pause as we wish each other New Year's happiness. Are we satisfied that the greeting should be trivial, or do we comprehend its possible depths? It is a sort of last infirmity with some noble minds to desire that they had been made otherwise, to resent the unceasing grip of this tremendous law, to quail at the prospect of an endless race towards a goal that shines ever brighter before us, and yet, the nearer we approach it, seems ever more remote. And it is the last gain of spiritual content that it can face without being appalled this deep heart-searching paradox; that it can look forward to the unknown day of trial, which may arrive at any moment, with trust that it may not be shaken out of its own serenity, and yet know that it will need the prayer again and yet again, "forgive;" that it can aspire with perpetual effort, and yet not feel itself debarred from entering already on perpetual fruition; that it can seek progress through continuous endeavour without disturbing its sense of attainment, its reality of communion; that it can be "ever a fighter," and yet be as calm in defeat as after victory; that it can go forward to eternal warfare, and yet abide in an eternal peace. Is this paradox altogether beyond our grasp? It holds, I believe, the secret of everlasting life; it contains the mystery of happiness for each new year, for every day, hidden for ever in the timelessness of God.

"In the Land that Lies at the Back of Things."

THE WORLD'S ORGAN.

You would like me to tell you something about the boy who went into the land that lies at the back of things? Well, I will try.

One day he was running down the side of a hill, when the path suddenly turned to the left, and before him rose another hill covered at the top, as it appeared, with tall trees. Now there seemed to be steps or stairs upon this hill, and he began to ascend them. When he looked the steps seemed ever so high, until they were lost in a light veil of cloud, so delicate and lovely, that it appeared almost transparent, and yet in colour of all lovely hues like mother o' pearl, and the hues which he saw at first seemed to have melted into the cloud. Up and up he went, yet he was not tired one bit, although the way looked very long when he started, and he seemed to be moving very quickly. And now, wonderful to tell, the forest which at first crowned the hill top, and then seemed to be veiled with clouds of opal, now looked like the entrance to some vast building, and so he found it to be. I cannot tell you what it was like, for he could never describe it to me, but it must have been like the Holy City, built of rubies and sapphires and emeralds, with doors of gold and pearl. Yet its grandeur and loveliness did not frighten him, but a feeling of awe came over him, for there was a strange stillness as if his father had just said, "James, I am going to speak to you!" and then all was quiet. In through the grand open door went the boy—silent, speechless. It was like a vast cathedral, but so different. There was no dull colourless stone, but the floor and pillars, the walls and roof, which seemed as high above him as heaven itself, were beautiful, as if made of seven lined rainbows and gold. All through the place was the perfume of incense, and—was it music he could hear? Surely, yes! For before him, and above him rose one vast organ front, with myriads of golden pipes, and the music was the most wonderful he had ever heard.

He could hear the wind sighing and moaning in the pine forest, laughing among the corn fields, and whispering a tale of love to the grasses and little flowers of the field. Then he could hear the bass notes of the ocean as it rolled and thundered, the cry of the sea-birds, and the tinkle of the thousand little streams that trickled down the face of the cliff. He could hear the music of the flowers as they grew, and of fruit as it ripened, and the notes of millions of small creatures that he never knew or saw.

In the organ front was a door, through which he passed and up a winding stair into an inner chamber as it were, and now he found that he was not alone; for the music of the organ seemed to be ascending and descending like armies of choirs of angels. Each angel was a messenger, a servant; all were different, and each had his duty to perform. From the organ's inner heart they

came, and up and up the golden spiral stairways which led—whither James did not know, nor could he see what became of them. Once more the boy stood in the little doorway and found himself beside one who sat at the organ, and whose hands were on the keys. He looked in the face of the little boy and smiled.

"Who are you?" asked James, with quiet courage.

"I am the organist," said he, "It is I who am playing."

"And where is your music book?" said the boy.

"I have none," said the organist.

"What!" said James, "do you know all this grand music by heart?"

"Yes," said the organist, "it comes from my heart. I think, and the music flows."

"What tune do you call it?" asked the boy.

"It has no name; it is myself. What would you call it?" asked the organist.

"It makes me think of the love of my mother," said the boy.

"Then call it *Love*," said the organist.

"Have you played long, and is there much more to play?" asked James.

"Yes," answered the organist. "This music goes on from everlasting to everlasting, it will never cease."

"And who are those angels I saw? They seemed to come from this organ."

"Yes," said the organist, "they are the music that I am making. My music is not all sound; when I play, my music lives, and every note becomes something. See! And it was as though the place was flooded with a greater sunlight, and the organ pipes became trees, and James could hear the music of the sap as it rose up beneath the bark. And some angels from the organ became leaves, and others became lovely flowers, and singing birds, and others butterflies and white floating clouds and drops of dew, snow crystals and stars of light. Some of the music was like a cry of pain, but it was only making lovelier harmony in the grand piece that was being played. Everything meant Love—Love past, Love present, Love to be. And the heart of the little boy sang with the rest, for he too was Love manifested, and God is Love!

G. A. K.

The Christian Message of Fraternity.

By the REV. W. H. DRUMMOND, B.A.

"If a man say I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar" (I John iv., 20). These are plain, strong words, but they cannot be too strong or too plain to express the place of "love of the brethren" in the teaching of Jesus Christ and the conduct of those who tried first to follow him. If we have to look a little narrowly in order to grasp his attitude towards Liberty and Equality, and to rely in some measure upon the general tone of his teaching rather than upon direct statements, it is otherwise when we come to speak of Fraternity. Love is one of the sovereign words of Christ. He saw in it one of the master forces of the soul. He dwelt on it so often and with such care; he charged it with new meanings and fashioned for it so many fresh channels of expression, that men came to regard it as the beginning and end of his message. And we can hardly say that they were not justified in doing so. No human faculty indeed was left untouched when it passed under the training of the Christian Spirit. It cleared the mind; it widened the imagination; it touched the conscience with the solemn fear of God. But nothing was more remarkable, or so likely to make a deep impression, as the way in which it gradually broke down the barriers between man and man, dissolved the feeling of separateness, and made men conscious that they were members of a divine family, each responsible for all, and all responsible for each, uplifted by the same hopes, quickened by the same love, saved with a common salvation. "Whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; or one member be honoured all the members rejoice with it," wrote St. Paul. Others had said much the same thing before—the philosophers and political theorists of the ancient world. When it was spoken with the force of the perfect Life behind it, men believed it, and it transfigured their lives. Thus to the Christian, Fraternity must always be a higher term than either Liberty or Equality. They are means; but it is an end. We claim to be freemen and equals that our lives, in all the strength and richness of what God meant them to be, may find their fitting place in the divine brotherhood—the kingdom of heaven.

The brotherhood of man is one of the features of Christianity which receives most emphasis at the present time. It is, indeed, spoken of as though it were the whole of religion, and nothing else were of any consequence. This is a narrow way of looking at it. One-sidedness never really helps any good cause. To slight the importance of prayer and worship and calm thoughtfulness, because you want men to fight the Lord's battles in the open field, is a policy which, in the long run, always spells failure. And so any attempt to reduce religion to its lowest terms, and define it as belief in human brotherhood, may be in the end to rob men of the very power which would enable them to become brotherly. It is too often to make them the slaves of a phrase instead of believers in a divine reality. I fear that we do not escape this danger altogether at the present time. "I believe in the brotherhood of man" is part of the creed of every self-respecting modern Christian. To how many has it become a common-place, fraught with the great danger of all religious common-place—unreal belief, fine words and pleasant emotions taking the place of the earnest faith and hard self-discipline of the good soldier of Jesus Christ? I do not say this because I at all under-rate the importance of this belief to religion, or overlook its marked influence in quickening the best life around us. We have only to recall the social sensitiveness, so strange to men of a former generation, or to read books like Kingsley's "Yeast," or "The Life of Lord Shaftsbury," in order to bring home to ourselves how much has been accomplished already, not through some vague advance of civilization, but directly under the impulse of Christian love and a holy passion for human brotherhood. It is just because this is so, and because the cause of brotherhood is claiming so much from us, that we should try to be clear in our own minds upon the meaning of our belief, the duties it imposes, the restraints it should place upon our personal habits and the limits of its influence, if indeed such limits exist.

I should say then that we have, first of all, to guard against being satisfied with conventional ideas of human brotherhood. We find, for instance, the idea very prevalent that the need of larger fraternity springs almost entirely from the inequality of possessions. One man is rich and another poor; one has a superfluity, and another has barely enough. Let him that has give to him that has not. This is indeed very sound and necessary advice, and it is often in this way that men come to realise some of the larger responsibilities of life. But to let the question of brotherhood centre, or even find its chief interest in the giving and receiving of money, is simply a mark of commercial narrowness and moral vulgarity. Many of us have become fixed in the idea that the main object and indispensable happiness of life is to get money, and if possible, to possess more of it than our neighbour; and so when we want to help our brother our thoughts turn naturally to charity. A wider view and a deeper sympathy would teach us how hard it is to give in this way without violating the natural human relations between man and man, and how often the money we bestow in thoughtless charity foments the very disease we desire to cure. Any man, who wishes to make his gifts of money a real expression of brotherhood, must be careful to give *rightly* and to give *kindly*. This means thought and patience and trouble. He can never fulfil his Christian duty by dealing out sops to his own conscience.

Another idea, which finds many advocates, is that our chief duty in the cause of brotherhood is to cherish a general feeling of kindness towards the world at large, and to make people comfortable and contented, leaving the future to the providence of heaven. How many sweet and beautiful souls have lived their lives in this belief, angels of light in the dark and dreary ways of the world, peacemakers bringing some of their own promised blessing to heal the strife between man and man, and class and class. Probably they could use the gifts which God has entrusted to them in no better way. And yet we may be able to see that after all theirs is no counsel of perfection. They are gently blind to the harder necessities of life, and sternness is quite hateful in their eyes. If we were to tell them, as we might do in all soberness, that the most brotherly service we can render to many men is to make them discontented and uncomfortable, they would be simply pained by our treason against the spirit of love. They have been captivated by the gentleness,

they have not yet learned the harder lesson of the severity of Christ.

Others there are who talk in an heroic strain about the levelling influences of universal brotherhood. They tell us that we are to love humanity and no longer cherish the narrow affection of family and kindred and country. They call us selfish because we make our nearer and more personal duties the first charge on our time. They seem to imagine, that if they were only given the oversight of the social machine for a day, they could banish all the groaning and friction of its parts and conquer the difficulties which have perplexed men for centuries. I confess that these would-be doctors of the body politic seem to me to fly in the face of the plain facts of human nature; and it is also not unnatural to persons of some caution to distrust such large and surprising claims. I do not question the earnestness of their convictions and the real usefulness of their enthusiasm in rousing men from the stupid apathy, which is the foe of all the higher interests of life. But they would help us more, if they would sometimes lay aside their prophetic mantle, and tell us what is the plain duty which brotherhood demands at the present moment, what is the next practical step which we can take in the direction of that millennium which they paint in such glowing colours.

I have spoken of these different ways in which the meaning and claims of Christian brotherhood are presented to us, and in every case with some degree of truth, because it will help us to see the need of looking at the whole subject from a point of view at once wider and more inclusive, more akin to the meaning and purpose of Christ himself. It is not enough that we should be charitable, or that we should have feelings easily stirred to pity, or that we should be pledged to the advocacy of some great reform. We have to bring the whole of our life with every gift of health and thought and feeling, of practical wisdom and far-seeing vision into the future,—not some section of it or the small fraction which we can spare from our own affairs, —but the whole of our life in the completeness of its strength, into relations of helpfulness with the life of the world. Does it sound a startling and unreasonable demand? Consider for a moment how many men are doing it unconsciously already. Is not every true life helping the larger life of the society in which it is placed? You cannot be honourable in business, or truthful in thought and speech, or affectionate in your own home without widening the influence of goodness in the world. What the Christian Spirit does is to reveal to us the meaning of this fact, to raise it into a conscious motive, to fill us with the joy of knowing that we can do all things, from our public actions to our most private and personal duties, in the love of the brethren. The merchant tells me that business must be conducted on business lines; and I agree with him. Slip-shod benevolence in business is bad political economy, and bad Christianity. But then as a Christian who believes in Fraternity, he is bound to remember that he has not simply his own interests to serve. His enterprise is a contribution to the welfare of the community; and he can find a higher gratification in being honourable in his dealings and humane in his relations with other men, because it is the debt he owes to the common good than because it is the best policy for himself. It is the presence of this motive, the sense of these wider moral relations which none of us can escape, whether we are in Church or on the Stock Exchange, which makes the difference between the just man, who is trusted and respected by all, and not least by his own workpeople, and the hard man who grinds the faces of the poor. Or perhaps it is the scholar, or the poet, or the scientific man, who tells me that he has no time for the bustling activities of public life. He keeps apart from the noisy cries of popular movements and is indifferent to the harsh judgments which pronounce him selfish and reckless of the common good. And, again, it is likely that I may agree with him, and believe, in spite of all that the quick-witted critics may say, that he is promoting human fraternity in what is for him the truest way. For I may know that his great gift can only ripen slowly and in quietness; or that he is engaged upon some work which demands long years of patient and unremitting toil, and that the thought which, above all others, keeps him faithful to it is not his own reputation, but his love for his fellow men, the blessing which his finished work is going to confer upon them.

We might speak in much the same terms of

thousands of quiet lives spent in the unmarked corners of the world. They seem to be hemmed in by their circumstances. They have no time, and, if they had the time, they are probably without the gifts to do any conspicuous work. They are puzzled themselves to know how they can promote the common good. And all the time they are doing it in the best way, simply by being themselves. It is they with their motherly hearts and sunny tempers, their gentle patience and devout prayers who form the pure Christian atmosphere, which is among the strongest safeguards and sweetest blessings of life.

And so fortified by these illustrations we may return to the statement which we made just now, that we are on the way to fulfil the claims of Christian brotherhood, when we do strongly and always simply and modestly, the work that God has given us the power to do best, inspired by the thought that it is our tribute to the *common-wealth*, one of the links, which by raising the scale of life and increasing its happiness and widening its opportunities, binds man closer to man.

There is another aspect of the subject which must now claim a few words. Any quickening of our sense of responsibilty and our power to help will restrain us from doing many things, and make us more sensitive to the bearing of our conduct, and especially of our pleasures upon the lives of other men. For instance, it will cause us to give up some habits of self-indulgence, luxury, or extravagance. They may not be things of great moment, but still sufficient to raise barriers, or to spoil the impression of simplicity and sincerity, or to give undue prominence to the machinery of life. In so far as they do this they are inconsistent with Christian love, for they weaken the relation of helpfulness between our life and the lives of other men. The influence of our habits is most direct in our own homes. We feel it to be no hardship to give up some things for our children's sake. I doubt whether any man can realise the true meaning and dignity of brotherhood, who does not know what it is to give up something also for humanity's sake. We can draw up no catalogue of things allowed or forbidden, so much depends upon varying circumstances; but we can print the Christian law on our hearts, "Who is weak and I am not weak." The result will be not to make life sombre and ascetic, but to clothe it with fairer simplicity and to open to us deeper sources of happiness.

I have said but little of the larger issues and the questions of reform which are often uppermost in the mind when we speak of Fraternity. I feel to the full their importance; but here it seemed best to lay chief stress upon the moral and spiritual facts which underlie the framework of human society. We are in danger sometimes of forgetting the wider opportunities which are open to us without waiting for the slow movement of legislation, or the better things which may be in store for us on the far side of a gradual social revolution. For these "better things" let us never cease to labour and to pray. But meanwhile we do well to remember that it is the men who live in brotherhood now, who do all their work strongly and sweetly in the love of the brethren, *and they only*, who can have a firm faith in the larger Liberty, the fuller Equality, the more Christian Fraternity, in which we profess to believe every time we bow before the throne of God and pray, "Thy kingdom come on earth."

Characteristics of R. L. Stevenson.

It is the mark of some of the greatest writers that they prefer men to books, and life to thought. Give a man an intense love of action, a desire to take part in stirring adventures, and then prevent his doing it either through weakness of body or untowardness of circumstance, and the result is a very promising preparation for a great writer. A famous lawyer has said that he regarded it as a distinct qualification for success in the legal profession that a man should have wished very much to have been something else. It is notorious that the greatest preacher of the last generation—Robertson of Brighton—longed to have been a soldier. There can be no question that many of the best writers have a certain disdain for letters. They write, as it were, by the way, or because they have been prevented from doing anything else. Like Lamb's Mrs. Battle, who lived for whist, and relaxed her mind over a book afterwards, they live for the game of life, and treat literature only

as a refreshment. We remember how Dante was the recognized leader of a Florentine party so all important to them that he can say, not boastfully but stating a simple truth, when it was proposed to send him on an embassy to the Pope, "If I go who will stay, and if I stay who will go?" We remember how Milton was Oliver Cromwell's secretary; how Goethe was prime minister at Weimar; how Gibbon enlists in the army as a private soldier, and how Scott was only prevented from entering on a life of adventure, for which he longed, by excessive lameness, and how he concealed his novel writing as though it were a vice. These, and many other instances which might be given, show the love for active life, for doing and not writing in some of our greatest authors.

"Sing riding's a joy! for me, I ride," says one of Browning's heroes. The greatest poets would rather ride gallantly to war, or happily beside the lady whom they love, than merely sing of riding in an armchair, and those who really prefer the armchair to the battle or the chase, lack one of the most important elements of the poet.

Now one of the dominant notes of Stevenson's character was an intense love of life. To him as to Browning it would be a sign of failure if a man

> "Had not sighed deep, laughed free,
> Starved, feasted, despaired, been happy."

"Books are good enough in their own way," he says, "but they are a mighty bloodless substitute for life." His father and grandfather had been famous maritime engineers, and had built many lighthouses. In one of his poems he almost apologises for his success in literature.

> "Say not of me that, weakly, I declined
> The labours of my sires, and fled the sea,
> The towers we founded, and the lamps we lit,
> To play at home with paper like a child.
> But rather say in the afternoon of time—
> A strenuous family dusted from its hands
> The sand of granite, and, beholding far
> Along the sounding coasts its pyramids,
> And tall memorials catch the dying sun,
> Smiled well content, and to this childish task
> Around the fire addressed its evening hours."

"I remember how Stevenson's face looked," writes an acquaintance, "when he said, that long though he had been tied to sedentary habits, and deeply though he loved the art they permitted him to practice, the one thing that he held to be the best, was still the joy of outdoor living."

And now to a character with this love of rough-and-tumble elemental forces, the sea, strong human passions, and "the bright face of danger," add what he tells us himself he possessed:—"A love for the art of words and the appearances of life"—and you have the incongruous union from which such striking literature proceeds.

Mr. Gosse has said, in a lecture, that Stevenson's death caused more widespread and deeper sorrow in England than the death of any other writer of the day would have done. What did he do, we ask, to cause such general admiration and affection? He is not amongst the greatest of poets or novelists, or thinkers, or critics, or scholars. He is, indeed, one of the greatest of stylists, but that alone would not account for the feeling.

Matthew Arnold said of Emerson, "He was a friend of those who wanted to live in the spirit." It might be said of Stevenson, he was a friend of those who want to live nobly in the body. All who love pure, breezy, physical life, who enjoy simple travelling, who delight in adventure, will find a friend in Stevenson. The five senses and the possibilities they offer of beautiful wholesome enjoyment are constantly the note of Stevenson's writing. Wordsworth goes out to find deep meanings in nature, to find something in her like himself. Stevenson looks at nature as it were from a bivouac, and his desire is not to interpret nature, but to become part of her. Writing in his "Travels with a Donkey," of a night passed in his sheep-skin sack on a sheltered mountain side, he says. "What seems a kind of temporal death to people choked between walls and curtains is only a light and living slumber to the man who sleeps afield. All night long he can hear nature breathing deeply and freely: even as he takes his rest she turns and smiles, and there is one stirring hour unknown to those who dwell in houses, when a wakeful influence goes abroad over the sleeping hemispheres, and all the outdoor world are on their feet. Cattle awake in the meadows; sheep break their fast on dewy hillsides, and change to a new lair among the ferns; and houseless men, who have lain down with the fowls, open their dim eyes, and behold the beauty of the night.

There is a special pleasure for some minds in the reflection that we share the impulse with all outdoor creatures in our neighbourhood, that we have escaped out of the Bastille of civilisation, and are become, for the time being, a mere kindly animal, and a sheep of nature's flock."

Walt Whitman said his poems were to be "Hymns in the praise of things." They are to make for a "certain high joy in living," "a brave delight fit for freedom's athletes." That might be taken as a true description of Stevenson's writings. He has a good deal in common with Whitman. They were alike in their quaint juxtaposition of high and low pleasures. Stevenson does not enjoy less the dinner at the end of his journey than "the morning visited by birds, or the night when the dew fell and the stars were of the party." "The true materialism," he says, "is to be ashamed of what we are. To detect the flavour of an olive is no less a piece of human perfection than to find beauty in the colours of the sunset." "With all my romance I am a realist and a prosaist and a most fanatical lover of plain physical sensations plainly and expressly rendered." There is an out of door atmosphere about his writings. He is a literary tramp, a rambler through reality. "For my part," he says, "I travel not to go anywhere, but to go; I travel for travel's sake. The great affair is to move: to feel the needs and hitches of our life more nearly: to come down off the feather-bed of civilisation and find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints." He does not go out to find anything, he does not botanise or geologise, he has no particular longing for Truth with a big T. He simply relates with exquisite simplicity and beauty the adventures of life whether amongst men or books or the blind forces of nature. He lived intensely in the present: you feel it in all his books. This is especially remarkable when we remember Stevenson was practically an invalid from early manhood to his death. Most invalids live much in the past or future. The constant threatenings and mutterings of death in his ears gave Stevenson something of the hardihood and philosophy of the soldier. "As courage and intelligence are the two qualities best worth a good man's cultivation, so it is the first part of intelligence to recognise our precarious estate in life, and the first part of courage to be not at all abashed before the fact. A frank and somewhat headlong carriage, not looking too anxiously before, not dallying in maudlin regret over the past, stamps the man who is well-armoured for this world. Being a true lover of living, a fellow with something pushing and spontaneous in his inside, he must, like any other soldier in any other stirring deadly warfare, push on at his best pace until he touch the goal."

This brave cheery attitude towards life is one of the strongest and most delightful impressions which Stevenson gives us. He had the spirit of adventure always; he treated sickness as Columbus treated storms. It was all in the day's work, to be met with indomitable courage and hopefulness; part of the curious surprises of this wholly wonderful life. "We are accustomed now-a-days," he says, "to a great deal of puling over the circumstances in which we are placed. The great refinement of many poetical gentlemen has rendered them practically unfit for the jostling and ugliness of life, and they record their unfitness at considerable length. This literature of woe is, in many ways, a most sickly and humiliating phenomena." Now of this fright or discouragement in the face of the cruelty of nature or the stupidity and wickedness of men, there is not a trace in Stevenson: problems of sin or of society didn't exist for him. "I love my fate to the core and the rind," said Thoreau. It is an accurate description of Stevenson's own feeling towards life. He never offers an explanation of its evil. "This harping," he says, "on life's dulness and man's meanness is a loud profession of incompetence: it is one of two things; the cry of the blind eye—I cannot see, or the complaint of the dumb tongue—I cannot utter." Let a man live amongst realities, and whether he win or lose in the ordinary sense, his life will be worth while.

> Life is so full of a number of things,
> I am sure we should all be as happy as kings.

What he says of W. Whitman's writings might be, with greater truth, applied to his own. "His books, whatever may be the final judgment of their merits, whatever may be their influence in the future, should be in the hands of all parents and guardians as a specific for the distressing malady of being 17 years old. Even sickness yields to his treatment, as to a charm of magic; and the youth, after a short course of

reading, ceases to carry the universe upon his shoulders." In his "Apology for Idlers," he describes the duty which he himself performs so well, and which constitutes his greatest claim upon our admiration and gratitude. "There is no duty we so much underrate as the duty of being happy. The other day, a ragged, barefoot boy ran down the street after a marble with so jolly an air that he set every one he passed into a good humour. One of these persons who had been delivered from more than usually black thoughts, stopped the little fellow and gave him some money, with this remark: 'You see what comes of looking pleased.' For my part I justify this encouragement of smiling rather than of tearful children. A happy man or woman is a better thing to find than a five-pound note. Their entrance into a room is as though another candle had been lighted. We need not care whether they could prove the 47th proposition of Euclid; they do a better thing than that: they practically demonstrate the great theorem of the liveableness of life." That is what Stevenson himself does under great stress of sickness and poverty: he demonstrates the liveableness of life. Sometimes his writing may indeed remind us of a boy running after marbles; it may seem to have no special end, no important lesson; but it always conveys that impression of the writer, "looking pleased," which is one of the most important lessons of all.

No one speaking of Stevenson can omit to mention the perfection of his literary style. He laboured as few authors have laboured to acquire the art of writing. It is difficult to give special examples of his style: almost everything he wrote is an example of it. The style of some great writers—as, *e.g.*, C. Lamb—might be described as full of "precious stones set in a silver sea." In such writers you find occasional sentences or paragraphs embedded, which are of a different quality to the rest. But Stevenson's style is "of equally good texture," and it is like that of Newman or Thackeray—a self-effacing one. It does not "strive nor cry." His art is felt in its total impression. Exquisite skill in finding the right word, and exquisite modesty in not calling attention to the fact that it is found are alike characteristics of Stevenson's style. He allows no cackling in his poultry-yard after the eggs are laid. To achieve his end he toiled, as he tells us Balzac did, "like a miner buried in a landslip"—recasting, revising, rejecting. "Art is," he says, "first of all and last of all, a trade. The love of words, and not a desire to publish new discoveries; the love of form, not a novel reading of historical events, mark the vocations of the writer and the painter." He is at once then a happy, pure minded boy, and a consummate artist. Art has recently become associated so much with pessimism, and has been the vehicle for conveying "our vague latter-day glooms and popular melancholies." In Stevenson you have art united with the optimism of a child. He is thus able to attract two very different classes of persons, whose literary admirations are usually widely separated—the Bohemian who demands no morality in his art, and the Philistine who demands no art in his morality. He is enjoyed for his freedom and unconventionality and artistic finish by those who assert that the artist has nothing to do with morality, and can write about anything he likes, if he does it with distinction and beauty; and he is enjoyed by those who have a bias in favour of the Ten Commandments, because we feel in him that "joy which is its own security," of which Wordsworth writes. Some correct parlour writers give you the impression of working in fetters; and, on the other hand, some emancipated writers dash their fists into the face of society, as though that was the only way to prove that their chains have been removed. Stevenson knows how to be free without being offensive, and thinks it possible to be an artist without being in violent opposition to everything that respectable middle-class people hold in reverence. His writings, apart from art and morality, will attract all in whom the primeval instincts of the race are strong. "There is a certain critic, not indeed of execution but of matter, whom I dare be known to set before the best: a certain low-browed, hairy gentleman, at first a percher in the fork of trees, next (as they relate) a dweller in caves, and whom I think I see squatting in cave mouths of a pleasant afternoon to munch his berries—his wife, that accomplished lady, squatting at his side. His name I never heard, but he is often described as 'Probably Arboreal,' which may serve for recognition. Each has his tree of ancestors, but at the top of all sits 'Probably Arboreal.' In all our veins there run some

minims of his old wild tree-top blood; our civilised nerves still tingle with his rude terrors and pleasures; and to that which would have moved our common ancestor, all must obediently thrill." The "Probably Arboreal" in us all, the tree-top memories, lying dormant like undeveloped negatives in the mind, answer to Stevenson's writings, and it is good, sometimes, to have these primeval memories recalled. This man, who died at 44, does not claim to have any profound philosophy, although he has one. He loved life to the core and rind, and the art of words by which that life could be expressed. Dying at the height of his power, full of hope and courage, he seems to have fulfilled the prophecy of one of his early essays. "Does not life," he asks, "go down with a better grace, foaming in full body over a precipice, than struggling to an end in sandy deltas?" When the Greeks made their fine saying, that those whom the Gods love die young, I cannot help believing that they had this sort of death also in their eye, for surely at whatever age it overtakes the man, this is to die young. Death has not been suffered to take so much as an illusion from his heart. In the hot-fit of life, a tiptoe on the highest point of being, he passes at a bound to the other side. The noise of the mallet and chisel is hardly quenched, the trumpets are scarcely done blowing, when trailing with him clouds of glory, this happy starred, full-blooded spirit shoots into the spiritual land. HENRY GOW.

Whitherward? *

II.

The questions raised by Mr. Jacks in the previous paper cannot be lightly passed over. Is there any finality in Unitarian Theology? Is there any article of our creed about which we can say, that is for ever settled? Does theological progress mean liberty to slough off the idea of God as well as the idea of a Trinity? Must we, in order to prove our claim to be the progressive party in theology, be always going one better in the way of renouncing old beliefs until we haven't a fig-leaf of dogma left to cover our nakedness? It sounds grand, heroic, and uncompromising to say "Come what may, we will follow the Truth wherever it may lead—we have nothing to do with the results and consequences." An admirable temper of mind. And yet may it not turn out that one of the proofs or disproofs of what we call Truth is in these some despised results? Suppose that following Truth, as I conceive it, lands me in a swamp. Many would say, and it would be hard to contradict them, the presumption is that you have mistaken a fire-fly of the night for the star of Truth. Suppose progressive theology can only keep its character by a perpetual process of negation and giving up and casting off? I have known many men of liberal sympathies in the Orthodox Churches with whom this has ever been a very real deterrent. They have said "In the name of Liberalism and Progress you throw away first one doctrine and then another, but where is this to end? Does progress mean that every question is to be an open question? When every other doctrine is cast overboard, save God and the Soul and Immortality, are we, that we may keep up our reputation as Progressive Theologians, to throw these also one by one to the hungry sharks of scepticism? Before we enter upon, this journey to which your progressive theology calls us, we should like to know where it will lead to, what port it will finally arrive at?"

Well, now, these may be very foolish fears and irrational questions, but I know that they have great influence with many. I mention them here because I think they point to a real danger which some of us are not quite alive to, the danger of supposing that to keep up our character as the Progressive Party, we must deny and discard a little more this year than last year, denuding ourselves shred by shred of our faith, and that Liberalism demands that we should keep all our convictions in a state of solution, ready to change them whenever we are called upon to prove that we are indeed the party of progress.

But is it true that unless our minds are in this state of flux, we have no right to inscribe the word "Progress" on our banner? If we regard faith in God, the Soul, and Immortality, as the irreducible minimum of the Christian Creed not open to question, at any rate by us, are we not sacrificing our claim to progress

* The subject will be continued in March by the Rev. A. Armstrong, B.A.

which our very position involves? Mr. Jacks suggests that along that line no further advance is possible without surrendering the very elements that are essential to a religious view of the universe. In that I perfectly agree with him. The theology of Dr. Martineau, as set forth in "The Seat of Authority," does not admit of further development in the way of sloughing off and discarding old beliefs without renouncing theology altogether.

But is progress, even progressive theology, simply a question of negativing one by one of the old beliefs? May there not be progress by way of expansion as well as diminution? Is progress only negative? May it not be positive? May it not be the case that in denying and casting-off some of the old dogmas of the Church, expressed as they were in forms abhorrent to conscience and reason, we have failed to grasp the truth on which they were founded and which gave them so much vitality? And may it not be the mission of progressive theology to rescue and universalise the truths which were imbedded in dogmas no longer credible? Are not many of the old legends, such, for instance, as those of the Incarnation and the Day of Pentecost, the crystallisation at particular crises in the religious development of men of world-wide convictions? Is it not the business of the progressive to release them from their local, limiting, and particular experience, and shew their universal scope? The theologians who constructed the creeds of Christendom were unable to conceive any doctrine without placing limitations upon it. Incarnation was for one only; Pentecost glorified one day only in the world's calendar; Reconciliation was by the cross of Calvary alone; the work of Atonement was confined to the great sufferer of Gethsemane. Men at that time could not conceive that the world was full of atoners, reconcilers, saviours of the race by their sufferings, sons of men in whom God was made flesh and dwelt among us. Is there not a great progressive work to be done in rescuing many truths of the Christian creed from the narrow limitations of history, "of flesh and blood," as St. Paul called them, of ritual and dogma, by showing their universal sway, their illimitable range? Is there no truth of universal application in the doctrine of Atonement which we have missed in our righteous protest against the idea of Substitution? Are we quite sure that there was no sense of a special burden imposed on Jesus by human sin and sorrow which led him to believe that he was bound to give his life a ransom for many? Although there be no such doctrine of Atonement in the New Testament as is enshrined in the creeds of the churches, are we sure that there is no doctrine of Atonement between man and the divine nature, of which the sufferings of Jesus, both in his life and his death, stand as the supreme example? Is there not that in the Gospel story, capable of all detachment from Jewish, Messianic, and miraculous traditions, which leaves us a Christ, whose childlike transparency of soul, whose grand comprehensiveness of sympathy, whose magnificent appeal for eternal righteousness, whose vividness and intensity of spiritual life, fit him for world-wide empire? Is there not a universalising of the Christian Creed which remains yet to be done? Ours is truly a majestic mission, not a whit less progressive because we regard some truths as final and absolute.—JOSEPH WOOD.

Rare Epitaphs.

Having many years culled quaint epitaphs, I make a selection from my store for the readers of the *Seed Sower*. The irreverence of some is more on the surface than at heart, while their homely wit covers a multitude of sins. Here is one from Ilfracombe Churchyard :—

"First wife's dead;
Here let her lie;
She's at rest,
And so am I."

The next has a little more sting and sulphur in it :—

"Here lies Mary, the wife of John Ford,
We hope her soul has gone to the Lord;
But if for hell she has changed this life,
She had better be there than be John Ford's wife."

The following is from Potterue, in Wiltshire :—

"Here lies Robert Trowlup,
Who made yon stones roll up;
When death took his soul up,
His body filled this hole up."

The next is copied from a mural tablet in the little old Parish Church of Minster, near Boscastle, in Cornwall :—

" Forty-nine years they lived as man and wife,
And, what's more rare, thus many without strife ;
She first departing, he a few weeks tried
To live without her, could not, and so died.
Both in their wedlock's great Sabbatic rest,
To be where there's no wedlock ever blest,
And, having here a jubilee begun,
They're taken hence that it may ne'er be done."

The following is copied from the parish register at Yattendon, Berks., for 1770 :—" recd. 5s. & 3d., being the fee of Wm. Hutchins for leave to place a Monument against the Church in Memory of his Son, full of absurdity." The epitaph in question runs as follows :—

"Oh ! Death, thy call was soon,
Thy pains were smart,
But I, prepared,
was ready to depart
In hopes to heaven, there to sit
with Saints and Angels bright,
Singing Hallelujahs,
In which I took delight."

I have also an old family paper with this inscription :—

"On a Mr. Peck.
Here lies a Peck, which some men say
Was first of all a Peck of clay ;
This wrought with skill divine, while fresh,
Became a curious Peck of flesh.
Through various forms its Maker ran,
Then adding breath made Peck a man ;
Full fifty years Peck felt life's troubles,
Till death reliev'd a Peck of troubles ;
Then fell poor Peck, as all things must,
And here he lies,—a Peck of dust."

The next two are Yankee epitaphs :—

"Jane C. M.
Here lies one who's
Life's thread's cut
Asunder ; she was
Struck dead by a clap
of Thunder ! "
"John L.
If there is a world above, he is in bliss ;
If there is not, he made the most of this."

Some specimens of Scotch epitaphs may not be amiss. Here is one from a churchyard near Paisley :—

" Once reddie and plump,
Tho' now a cold lump,
Beneath this old stump,
Lies honest Joe Clump,
Who wished his neighbours no evil ;
Tho' now by death's thump,
He is laid full plump ;
Yet up he shall jump,
When he hears the last trump,
In triumph o'er Death and the Devil ! "

On John Davie, bookbinder, Kilmarnock, well known for being, while in life, constantly on the trot :—

" Here rests John Davie, say he may,
For faith the body's tired,
Who never rested night nor day,
Till that day he expired."

On Joshua Lodge, tailor in Edinburgh :—

" Here lies the body o' Joshua Lodge,
Wha died for want of mair cabbage ;
He never fail'd to hae a goose,
Whilk was nae dainty in his house.
But death at last cam' till his bed,
An' shot his dart into his head,
But left his wife to stay behind,
To eat what cabbage she could find."

In Leslie Churchyard, Fifeshire :—

" Here lies the body of Andrew Brown,
Sometime a wright in Lunnon toon,
In the year seventeen huner and seventy-three,
When coming his parents for to see,
Of a cauld and a sair host,
He died upon the Yorkshire coast."

On a schoolmaster in Cleish parish, Fifeshire :—

" Here lie Willie M—— hies banes :
O Satan, when ye tak him,
Gie him the schulin o' your weans,
For clever de'ils he'll mak 'em."

It seems almost a pity that the rules and proprieties of modern cemeteries forbid all such attempts at originality and humour by the sons of this decadent age.—Corpus Tombs.

News from the Field.

We find it quite impossible to make room for the crowd of notices sent us of Christmas and New Year Tea Meetings, Children's Treats, Father Christmas and Santa Claus Parties, etc., etc. The Churches appear to have been more than usually busy at the festive season, cultivating the social element and providing good cheer for the poor. In some of the Churches and Missions as many as half-a-dozen festive gatherings are reported as well as large gifts of clothing and food. We are sure they have found that "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

At the moment of going to press we hear of the death, after a short illness, of our dear friend and fellow-labourer, Mr. Myers of Shrewsbury. Mr. Myers was well known and highly honoured in the Midlands. His work at Walsall, Birmingham, Wolverhampton, and Shrewsbury endeared him to many. He was a man of large heart and earnest convictions. He did yeoman service on the Education question. We sympathise deeply with our friends at Shrewsbury and with the members of a bereaved and sorrowing family.

THE CHILDREN'S PAGE.

The History of Tip-Top.

By Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe.

V.—THE FRIGHT.

The very next day the lovely creature, with bright eyes and a fur coat, came and sat under the apple tree, and looked up with such an innocent, friendly face that Tip-top nodded to her and gave her a little welcome chirup.

"Oh! there is that monster mother said would eat me up," cried Speckle. "Let us keep out of sight in the nest."

"Nonsense, only look at her," said Tip-top, "her eyes are like gold,"

"No, don't look at her," said Singer and Speckle; "she wants to eat us up, mother said so."

"I should just like to see her try to eat me up," said Tip-top, again balancing his short tail over the nest. "As if she would! She is just the nicest, most harmless creature going, and only wants to have fun. We never do have any fun in this old nest."

"Her paws are white as velvet," said Tip-top. "I don't see any claws, and so I don't believe she has any."

"Don't go, brother, oh don't!" screamed both the sisters.

All that we know about it is, that a moment after, a dreadful scream was heard from the nursery window: "O mother, mother, do come here! Tip-top has fallen out of the nest, and the cat has got him!"

Away ran Puss, with foolish little Tip-top in her mouth. She was praised when she caught a mouse, she thought that she ought to be praised now. How was she to know the difference?

"Oh, where is he, where is he? Do find my poor Tip-top!" cried Jamie, as loud as he could scream "Where has the cat taken him?"

In the meantime, Pussy had run to a private place among the currant bushes, while all the little curly heads were scattered up and down the garden looking for her.

Mr. and Mrs. Robin, who had come home, now joined their sad, plaintive chirping to the other noises; and Mother Robin's bright eyes soon found her poor little son, where Pussy had him safe among the currant bushes.

Jamie saw her, too, and p'unging into the bushes, caught the cat with luckless Tip-top in mouth. He soon made her let go.

Tip-top was not dead, but in a sadly torn and draggled state. Some of his feathers were torn out, and one of his wings was hanging down in a sad way.

"Oh, what shall we do for him? He will die, poor Tip-top!" said the children.

"Let us put him back into the nest, children," said their mother. "His mother will know best what to do with him."

So a ladder was fetched, and father climbed up and put poor Tip-top safely into the nest. The cat had shaken all the nonsense well out of him; he was a dreadfully humbled young robin. From that time he did not wish to leave the nest too soon; but waited patiently until his wing-feathers were grown. He never called what his mother said "humbug" again, you may be sure.

Droll Sayings.

Bobby has offended and received the reward of his misdoing. "It isn't fair," he protested. "I only threw the kitten out of the window once and you gave me two slaps."

Teacher: Gerty, you were a very good girl to-day." "Yes, ma'am; I had a stiff neck."

"Ma," says a little girl. "If you'll let me buy some candy I'll be so good!" "My child," solemnly responded the mother, "you should not be good for pay." "Why, ma," exclaimed the child, "you would not have me good for nothing."

Our little Caddie, four years old, was accused by her mother of having lost her memory, and the child looked bewildered for a moment, and then light seemed to dawn upon her, for she exclaimed: "I dess I know what memory is. Its the ting I fordet wiv."

Confession.

Dear pussy, I love you, an' I's your true friend,
'Cause I saved you a whippin' to-day,
When cook missed her custard, and every one said
It was puss that had stealed it away.
You know you are naughty sometimes, pussy dear,
So in course you got blamed, an'—all that!
An' cook took a stick, an' she 'clared she would beat
The thief out that mizzable cat!
But I—didn't feel comfor'ble down in my heart,
So I saved you a whippin' you see,
'Cause I went to mamma, an' telled her I 'spect
She'd better tell cook to whip me.

'Cause the custard was stealed by a bad little girl
Who felt dreffely sorry with shame,
An' it wouldn't be fair to whip pussy, in course,
When that bad little girl was to blame.
"Was it my little girlie?" my dear mamma said.
I felt dreffely scared, but I nodded my head;
An' then mamma laughed. "Go find nurse, for I guess
There's some custard to wash off a little girl's dress."
Well, then, 'course they knew
It was I, an' not you,
Who stealed all the custard, an' then ran away.
But it's best to be true
In the things that we do,
An'—that's how I saved you a spankin' to-day.